

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 were pending in the application. Claims 1-29 have been amended. No claims have been added or cancelled. Therefore, claims 1-29 are pending and resubmitted for consideration.

In response to the restriction requirement set forth in the Office Action mailed January 19, 2007, Applicants hereby provisionally elect Group I, including claims 1-19, for examination.

Applicants respectfully traverse the restriction between Groups I, II, and III. Group I includes claims directed to a protection system, while Groups II and III includes claims directed to a method. Groups I, II, and III should be examined together in this application.

The Examiner contends that Groups I, II, and II do not relate to a single inventive concept because they lack the same or corresponding special technical features. The Examiner specifically cites that Group I requires a protective structure for protecting a riser when in a retracted position, which is not required in Groups II or III. Further, the Examiner states that Group II requires a loading/unloading buoy which is not required by Group III. Claim 1 has been amended such that the preamble now recites a "protective system for protection of a loading system for transfer of hydrocarbons." Claim 20 has been amended such that the preamble now states a method "for protecting a loading system for transfer of hydrocarbons." Claim 29 originally calls for a method "for installing a riser protection system on a sea bed."

Claim 20 has been amended to include that the riser protection "protects at least the upper portion of the riser when in a retracted position." Further, claim 29 has been amended to state that a protective structure is established "to protect a portion of the riser when in a retracted position." Additionally, claim 29 has been amended to include a "loading/unloading buoy." Thus, as amended, claims 1, 20, and 29 a "buoy" and a protection system that protects a riser "when in a retracted position." Consequently, these bases for the restriction requirement have been eliminated.

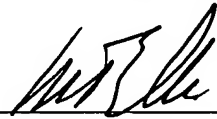
For the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully traverse the restriction and request examination of Groups I, II, and III together.

Applicants, of course, reserve the right to file divisional applications covering the subject matter of the non-elected claims.

Receipt of an initial Office Action on the merits is awaited.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 

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